REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application is requested. Claims 18-22, 24-33 and 35-37 will be active in the application subsequent to entry of this Amendment.

Claim 34 has been rewritten as two new independent claims, 35 and 36 which emphasizes, in an independent claim, a preferred range for the ratio of components (A) and (B). New claim 37 is directed specifically to the embodiment in which the weight ratio of (A) to (B) is 1:0.05. The significance of a value for (B) of 0.5 is shown in the experimental data, Table 1 included with Mr. Kato's declaration made October 30, 2002. In this Table Experiment 2 at a ratio of (A):(B) of 1:0.05 shows results superior to Experiments 5, 7, 9, 11 and 13 as regards stability. Experiment 2 uses one part by weight of sodium rabeprazole and 0.05 parts by weight of sodium hydroxide. Experiments 5, 7, 9, 11 and 13 use one part by weight of sodium rabeprazole and 0.05 parts by weight of another alkali metal compound.

Applicants traverse the prior art-based rejections directed towards claims 18-20 and 24-33 and again direct the examiner's attention to the evidence of record.

Pages 5-6 of the Official Action include the examiner's comments, observations and arguments as regarding the evidence of record. Addressing these in the order presented, the examiner will note that claims 35-37 specify ratios far different from a ratio of 1:2 in particular attention is directed to these claims.

As to the second comment, a change of color is indicative of degradation of the active ingredient. The means of measuring color difference are given on pages 3-4 of the declaration. The lack of change of color is indicative of stabilization of the active ingredient and is assessed under stressed conditions.

As to the fourth comment in the examiner's Letter, applicants do not have data available for rabeprazole in its free base form. However, it is submitted that one of ordinary skill in the art would appreciate there would be no substantial difference as

between the free product and the sodium form and both would benefit from and be stabilized by their mixture with the relevant amounts of sodium hydroxide.

Finally, the specification itself includes information on page 11 and Table 11 at the lower limit of sodium hydroxide of 0.01 parts by weight for one part by weight of the active ingredient.

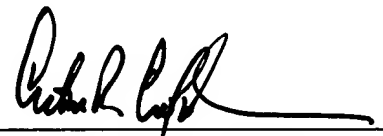
Applicants have addressed the issues raised in the outstanding Official Action dealing primarily with the nature of the evidence now under review. Reconsideration and favorable action are solicited.

Attention is directed to the Information Disclosure Statement filed on April 21, 2003 together with relevant fee.

Further examination on the merits is awaited.

Respectfully submitted,

NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C.

By: 

Arthur R. Crawford
Reg. No. 25,327

ARC:eaw
1100 North Glebe Road, 8th Floor
Arlington, VA 22201-4714
Telephone: (703) 816-4000
Facsimile: (703) 816-4100